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# Connecting Kids to Nature

Building  
Our  
Future  
Through  
Conservation  
Education



Program  
Highlights





Two U.S. Presidents from Illinois uphold the value  
of focusing on America's children...

Then...

*Education is... the most important subject which we  
as a people can engage in.*

—President Abraham Lincoln, March 9, 1832  
First political announcement

Now...

*... We honor them not only because they are  
guardians of our liberty, but because they embody  
the spirit of service: a willingness to find meaning  
in something greater than themselves.*

*And yet, at this moment, a moment that will define  
a generation, it is precisely this spirit that must  
inhabit us all....*

—President Barack Obama, January 20, 2009  
Inaugural Address

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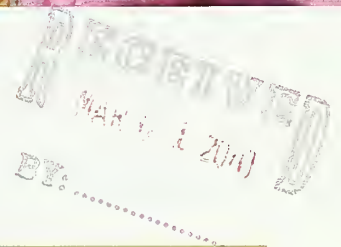
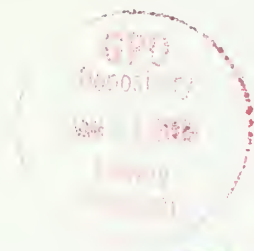
Advancing Access to  
Global Information for  
Agriculture



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



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# Introduction



What's growing behind that rock? What animal just ran across the creek? Stop! Did you hear THAT? What IS that smell? Kids find answers to these questions—but not on their computers.

The answers lurk in the woods, move through the forest, scurry across rangelands, and rustle through leaves. Children learn that the only way to discover the answers is to experience the forest. To connect with nature, kids walk among trees, peek under rocks, cross creeks, and feel the wind blow across prairies.

## What is the natural connection for America's kids?

When children step away from their computers and into nature, they connect with the sights, sounds, and scents of the forests and rangelands. Kids in the woods see what lives under a rock, peer up at neighborhoods in a tree, and investigate what's moving under the water along the bottom of a creek bed. Kids turn to the drumming of a woodpecker, stop to ponder the rustling in the underbrush, and recognize the music of moving water in the distance. They become familiar with the scent of mammals, the aroma of impending rain, and the fragrance of blooming plants. Kids in the woods feel and know the life around them. They connect with nature and America's natural resources.

## How do America's kids make that connection?

America's children reach the sights, sounds, and scents of the forest and grassland with the help of the Forest Service and its partners, who care about America's natural wealth and the ecological services, such as clean air and water, that natural resources provide. Kids in the woods prepare to care for the land they will inherit—prepare to one day understand, analyze, and resolve issues surrounding changes in climate and demographics and demands for clean air, clean water, and healthy wildlife habitats.

## What is America's goal?

America's goal is to keep its young people following the trail that the Forest Service started more than 100 years ago—the trek to keep our country's natural resources, forests, and grasslands safe, healthy, and productive. Just as the first Chief of the Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot, sought to provide meaningful outdoor experiences and education programs for the greatest number of people, today's forest stewards—rangers, scientists, educators, foundations,

# Conservation

information

awareness

knowledge

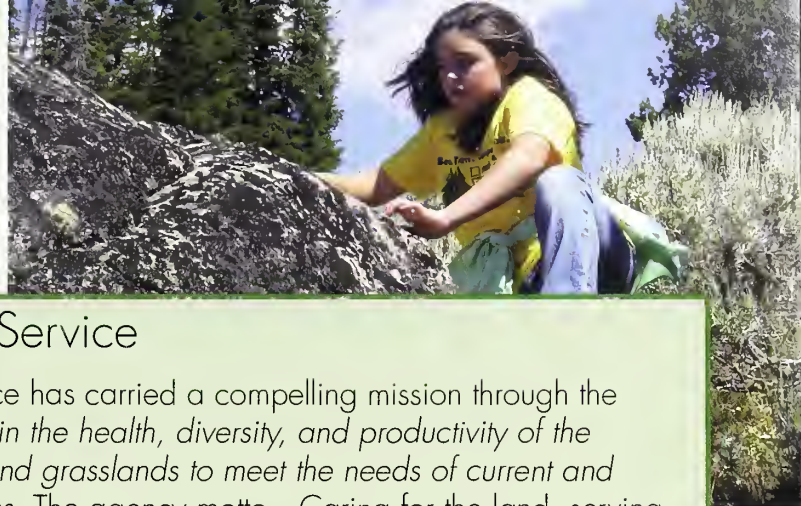


corporations—help kids connect to nature. As Americans become more urbanized and disconnected from the natural world, these stewards reach out to children in cities and urban areas to help them establish a connection to the natural world. They prepare kids to meet the challenges of sustainable land management by getting those kids to walk in the woods, climb over rocks, cross creeks, look under logs, run through tall grasses, absorb sounds, and smell their surroundings.

### What do America's kids gain?

America's kids gain real-life, multisensory adventures. They gain knowledge about the woods, skills they need to find their way, and inspiration to seek careers in natural resources and land management. They gain an understanding about the value in America's lands and the need to care for those lands so future generations can experience the sights, sounds, and scents of the forests and grasslands.

So, read how America's children come to their senses. Travel through these pages to learn about the programs and people who help our kids walk into the woods for an outdoor, out-of-computer experience.



## The Forest Service

The Forest Service has carried a compelling mission through the decades—*Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forest and grasslands to meet the needs of current and future generations*. The agency motto—Caring for the land, serving people—has remained the same for a century. It is the organizational DNA of the agency and the people who work there—the stuff that drives them, inspires them, and lends purpose to their every program, plan, and partnership. Even as the agency faces a new America—the Nation's young people—the Forest Service delivers the same message, motto, mission, and vision, but in new and exciting ways.

The Forest Service conducts thousands of programs that reconnect kids with nature, from interagency, nationwide, year-round programs that positively affect large numbers of children to local events that target a limited population of youth. Some programs introduce children to an outdoor experience at an early age, while other programs provide a more immersive educational experience for older students. The Forest Service field offices demonstrate seemingly limitless creativity as they engage kids and appeal to their different interests and backgrounds.

With 155 national forests and 20 grasslands on 193 million acres in 43 States and Puerto Rico, the Forest Service offers its big backyard as a rich resource for children and adults of all ages. While managing 20 million acres of wilderness areas, 143,000 miles of land and water trails, and more than 6,000 campgrounds, the agency offers these forests, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, experimental forests, and visitor centers for learning, studying, fishing, hunting, hiking, geocaching, and camping. Forest Service workers offer children an endless array of recreational and educational opportunities in myriad natural settings to help reconnect kids with nature.

## Education

skills

actions

leadership

stewardship



*If you don't know where you are, you don't know who  
you are.*

—Wendell Berry, American writer and farmer

# Bring Forest Service Science to Teachers and the Classroom

All across America, teachers are opening doors to let the kids out. Whether through an in-service teacher-training program, a scientific journal, or a developed curriculum, the Forest Service and its partners are bringing Forest Service science to teachers and the classroom. In turn, teachers are using these tools to take students out of the classroom and into the natural environment that enriches their local community. Together, they are producing future community leaders with a strong sense of place who will practice good stewardship in their communities and care for the natural resources within those communities.



## Just the facts

The Forest Service reached more than 732,000 students and 172,000 educators directly with educational programming in 2008.



# A Forest for Every Classroom



A Forest for Every Classroom teachers learn about ferns in Vermont.

## *A Forest for Every*

*Classroom vision: If today's students are to become responsible environmental decision makers, they must understand the local ecosystems in which they live and they must have educational opportunities based on real life issues that encourage them to practice citizenship in their own communities.*

Students in Vermont are learning from the public lands in their communities and helping to care for those lands. They are the lucky kids whose teachers have studied for a year with a professional development program for educators called *A Forest for Every Classroom (FFEC)*. Sometimes these children study in the forest, where the earth, sky, plants, and animals become their classroom.

Developed by a unique partnership of public land management agencies and nonprofit organizations, *FFEC* provides resource-based activities for kids, as well as for people of all ages. Sometimes the students learn in the forest, and sometimes they learn in school classrooms and at community centers. All the while, they learn from the public lands and they learn about caring for those public lands. The broad partnership of public and private organizations that supports the program includes the Green Mountain National Forest, Shelburne Farms, the Conservation Study Institute, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Northern Forest Center.

*FFEC* not only brings the forest to the classroom, but it takes the classroom to the community, where students engage in service-learning activities. The in-service teacher-training program, which is rooted in place-based education theory, uses collaboration to increase the effectiveness of organizations to serve communities, enhance educational outreach, and protect public lands. In a holistic manner, the students and teachers join with the community and its natural resources in activities to improve the environmental, social, and economic health and vitality of the community. *FFEC* is so much fun for kids that it boosts their academic achievement. Students who engage with their teachers to study and address relevant local issues gain higher levels of learner engagement. Their participation with the community results in stronger support for education and conservation within the local community. The teachers, children, and community as a whole renew their sense of value for the spirit of place.





## Just the facts

More than 143 teachers in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Texas have participated in the *Forest for Every Classroom* teacher training program.



*During FFEC, teachers meet with natural resource professionals and learn ways to bring the forest to their classrooms.*

*This has been the best professional development I've done in my 20 years of teaching. The seriousness and dedication they put into it, the thoughtfulness to come up with those ideas and to actually provide it.*

—A fourth-grade teacher, regarding *A Forest for Every Classroom*

Teachers who participate in *FFEC* bring new content to their classrooms, discuss new ideas about how to link subjects to the local community through field experience with resource specialists, and receive support in developing and writing a natural resource curriculum to use in their teaching. They also earn graduate credits from an accredited university.

Because of the program's success in Vermont, the Forest Service has worked with partners in Montana, New Hampshire, and Texas, where *FFEC* teachers also know how to turn the forest into a classroom for their kids.

For more information, go to <http://www.nhplt.org/FFEC.htm>.

# Natural Inquirer



The *Natural Inquirer* works with kids and classrooms to review a draft of the journal.

## Mission of *Natural Inquirer*:

We are the source for accessible science for middle school students.

We stimulate critical thinking about science and the scientific process, leading to better decisions about natural resources and the environment.

The core purpose of the *Natural Inquirer* is to clearly communicate Forest Service research to promote active learning through understanding and using the scientific process.

Middle school students across the country are “up close and personal” with Forest Service scientists who write for the *Natural Inquirer*, a science education journal, now in its 11th year. The scientists share their research interests and results with students and educators through a fun and informative publication. Each issue of the journal is dedicated to a specific theme that highlights the Forest Service’s current research in areas such as wildfire, urban forestry, and climate change. In each issue the kids “meet the scientists” before reading background information on science and the environment and about the scientists’ specific research.

In 2008, students had the opportunity to read three new editions of the *Natural Inquirer*. In the “World’s Forest” edition, written from a Food and Agriculture Organization report, children learn how global forest resources are assessed. The “FACELook” edition, a new monograph, invites students to explore the relationship between carbon, photosynthesis, and roots of trees. The “Worming Their Way In” edition, another new monograph, encourages kids to examine the effects of nonnative earthworms on the environment.

The “Climate Change” edition of the *Natural Inquirer* invites students, as global citizens who share environmental concerns with people around the world, to explore climate change and its relationship to forests, grasslands, air, and water. It gives them an insider’s look at Forest Service scientists who are studying a variety of issues surrounding climate change—how to help reduce and slow the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, how an increase in temperatures can activate the emergence of pine beetles for a longer period of the year and thus provide more opportunity for the beetles to destroy trees, how selecting the right tree species for planting can result in less carbon dioxide being emitted over time, and how global climate change will cause types of forests and vegetation to adapt to new climate temperatures and rainfall patterns that may lead to a change in species.

Teachers also had new opportunities in 2008, when the Forest Service presented a new teacher workshop using the *Natural Inquirer* at the Sally Ride Science Educator Conference: “Earth Then, Earth Now, Our Changing Climate.” Educators learned about the *Natural Inquirer* and about techniques for presenting information to students in a culturally sensitive way.

For more information, visit <http://www.naturalinquirer.org>.





## Just the facts

Each year, the Forest Service distributes more than 60,000 *Natural Inquirer* science education journals to middle school classrooms across America.

## Natural Inquirer

Worming Their Way In:  
Invading Earthworms in the  
Southeastern United States



A *Natural Inquirer* Monograph • Volume 1 • Number 2 • August 2008



[The *Natural Inquirer* is] absolutely 'the best' to help me meet Arkansas science frameworks. Thank you so much for making these available to us. I have a 15-acre outdoor classroom on our campus, and these books are great to use with lessons about outdoors.

—K.R., Middle School Science Teacher, Arkansas



# Rivers of Life... Where We All Live



Children explore the aquatic environment.

Motto of *Rivers of Life*  
program:  
*We all live downstream!*

Students who learn about rivers and aquatic ecosystems understand how important they are for transportation, nourishment, and recreation... and how important they are for satisfying America's vital need for clean water. These kids take on the shared responsibility for maintaining healthy watersheds. They come to understand how the condition of the water affects everyone who lives downstream—and we all live downstream.

The opportunity for these children to connect with aquatic ecosystems comes from a cooperative curriculum development venture spearheaded by the Western Divide Ranger District of the Sequoia National Forest in partnership with Springville Union School, Kaweah Flyfishers, and Southern California Edison. Motivated by the *Rivers of Life* projects, activities, and resources, students explore their local Tule River watershed, use technology to map and estimate the size of the watershed, and investigate river habitats to understand their importance for trout, other wildlife, and humans.

With their teachers using the Internet-based curriculum to direct them through the *Rivers of Life* curriculum, students learn to identify macro-invertebrates. They experience the trout life cycle by raising trout from eggs to fry in the classroom and then releasing them at the river. While working with a watershed model, these kids explore how they can affect the quality of America's rivers. Using science field techniques to analyze samples from the river and their homes, they assess and monitor water quality. They learn how the river provides water to their community and how the community uses that water. They learn firsthand the difference one caring individual can make for the people who live downstream—and that would be all of us. These students learn while having fun in the wilderness. They learn about trout and make trout t-shirts. They even learn how to fly-fish in the river they have come to respect.

*Rivers of Life* students not only know many new concepts about water, they now appreciate their local watershed, are challenged to keep their water clean, and have become willing stewards of their local environment. The children know what it means to live downstream, and they want to help provide a healthy aquatic environment for today's kids and for the kids who are yet to come.

For more information, visit <http://cgee.hamline.edu/rivers/>.

# Downstream

Sequoia National Forest, California

*The Rivers of Life program is one of the highlights for our students each year. They become extremely involved in raising their trout and keeping them healthy, much like doting parents. Seeing the kids release their trout is priceless... they have a direct bond with their fishy friend and, for the first time, truly get the need to keep our streams and watersheds healthy.*

—Donna Barker, William R. Buckley Elementary School



*Students in a watershed education program in Alaska learn about amphibians.*

*Investigating the aquatic environment helps children learn about watersheds.*



## Just the facts

Forests in the United States provide drinking water for more than 180 million people. Of those people, 66 million rely on national forests for their water source.



*Today we celebrate new hope in America. When communities get involved, we can work together with schools and their students to make the environment better for us all.*

— Safiya Samman, Director of Conservation Education,  
Forest Service, speaking in Washington, DC



# Hang Out the Welcome Sign in Urban America

Kids in America's cities are seeing the forests in spite of the concrete. The Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) conservation education, civil rights, and other programs have hung out the welcome sign in urban America and seized a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape strategies that are helping to develop tomorrow's conservation leaders and stewards. UCF programs make forest land resources available to all children—not just the kids who live on or near national forest land—and help kids connect with nature. The Urban Connections program of the Forest Service Eastern Region operates in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis, where it offers children extraordinary journeys out of the classroom, away from the computer, and beyond the concrete of the city—journeys into the woods, through the wetlands, and across the meadows.

## Just the facts

According to the 2000 Census, 79 percent of the U.S. population lives in urban areas.



# New York City Urban Field Station Pursues Research



Harlem Link Charter School children explore a neighborhood wetland.

In 2008, 54 teenage residents of New York City Public Housing Authority public housing immersed themselves in potential environmental careers through the Green Collar Mentoring series.

Kids in New York City from kindergarten through grade 12 actively conduct research in the city's forests. They study the local environment as they prepare to become life-long stewards of the country's largest city's natural resources. Guided by partnerships created through the Forest Service's Northern Research Station and the New York City Urban Field Station, these children actively participate in an extensive *Research in Action* program.

During the 2007–2008 school year, children from the Harlem Link Charter School walked and hiked through surrounding forests, wetlands, and restoration sites as they participated in a hands-on learning experience. Driven by their natural curiosity about the environment, they rearranged the forest floor to see nature's cities of living creatures beneath the leaves, and they walked across bridges to peer at other natural cities alive in the waters of wetlands. The Nature Fieldwork Partnership—a collaboration of the Northern Research Station, the Urban Field Station, Harlem Link Charter School, Meadowlands Environment Center (New Jersey), and the New York Botanical Garden—supplements the school's science curriculum and gets the kids out of the classroom and into the woods.

In 2008, Bronx high school students got their hands dirty as they learned about their local environment through a paid internship program in which they cared for trees, identified trees, conducted tree pit gardening, inventoried trees, and restored parkland habitat. At the same time, this active engagement with local open space and urban forest enhanced the teenagers' reading, critical-thinking, work readiness, and problem-solving skills. The Bronx Youth Urban Forestry Empowerment Program was funded through a 2008 *More Kids in the Woods* project in partnership with Trees New York and the New York City Housing Authority.

Teenagers who reside in New York City public housing and minority communities are out in the field collecting data as they explore their urban environment side by side with green collar workers who are themselves from minority communities. The students also spend time in classroom mentoring sessions with leaders in the urban environmental, forestry, and horticulture fields. Focused on environmental literacy and natural resource management in the urban environment, the



# Field Station in Action

Northern Research Station, New York

teenagers are increasing their environmental awareness as they prepare for educational and career opportunities in the environmental fields. The Green Collar Mentoring series was developed through a partnership between the Northern Research Station, Urban Field Station, and the Horticultural Society of New York and was supported with Forest Service Civil Rights Special Project funding. The Green Collar Mentoring series won the 2008 Civil Rights *Outstanding Location* award.

For more information, visit  
<http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/nyc>.



## Just the facts

Urban Field Station staff serve on the Advisory Board and chair the Research and Evaluation Committee for the *Million Trees NYC* campaign, a public-private partnership to plant 1 million new trees over 10 years citywide that has substantial environmental education and community stewardship components.

*Then-Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell and partners break ground on New York City's One Million Trees campaign.*

*When you're out in the forest, move some of those leaves aside and look real closely at what's crawling around underneath. You'll find out there are lots of bugs and worms and really cool things.*

—Abigail Kimbell, Then-Forest Service Chief, in conversation with students from Harlem Link Charter School, New York City

# Windows on Watersheds &



Students in Portland, OR, learn about watersheds and wildlife.

The goal for students participating in the *Windows on Watersheds & Wildlife* program is to discover how plant and animal communities change from urban landscapes to remote forest settings.

City kids in Portland, OR, don't always have their eyes focused on the textbook. Sometimes they are looking out the window—well, actually through the window. Since September 2008, these window-gazing kids from several Portland area schools have been exploring natural areas, ranging from small urban parks to remote forest landscapes as part of the *Windows on Watersheds & Wildlife* program. While surveying and documenting biological communities within the project, the students work alongside natural resource professionals from agencies such as the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Portland Metro, an opportunity that enables children to learn about natural resource careers.

Students are collecting biological data within urban natural areas and installing fixed cameras at several sites. The project continues in 2009 with visits to more remote forest settings, such as Oxbow Regional Park, Mount Hood National Forest, and Gifford Pinchot National Forest. In the spring, students will compile and interpret their data and display their findings in plant and animal manuals. They will also produce a plant/wildlife association map to reflect their GPS (Global Positioning System) data collection and GIS (Geographic Information System) work. Along the way, students will learn about management objectives relevant to the diverse settings they are exploring.

*Windows on Watersheds & Wildlife* is a program of the Inner City Youth Institute (ICYI), which has a long-standing tradition of providing high-quality natural resource education. The program was made possible through a *More Kids in the Woods* program funding.



# Wildlife

Pacific Northwest Research Station, Oregon



## Just the facts

In 2008, the Inner City Youth Institute reached 200 students and 5 educators.



*Portland students have the opportunity to work with resource professionals as they learn about the forest.*

*Our project results (wildlife photos) generate a lot of questions back at the high school.... My kids are super interested in the wildlife photos.... A lesson we learn from the project is the importance of taking better notes in the field!*

—Kevin Zerzan, teacher, Gladstone High School

# Urban Connections Expanding Its Reach



Students are playing, learning, and working in the woods through the Urban Connections program.

Kids in Michigan are playing, learning, and working in the woods. Children who attend The Henry Ford youth camp program now experience a new emphasis on conservation education and learn about the changes in forest management over time. High school students are learning how to perform forest inventories.

These programs have grown out of the Forest Service's community partnerships. The camping program comes from the Eastern Region's *Urban Connections* program and its long-standing and valued partnership with The Henry Ford, a venue for American history and education. The high school forest inventory program is made possible through the *Urban Connections*' partnership with The Greening of Detroit's Conservation Leadership Corps.

For more information, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/urbanconnections/>.

*Urban Connections* is an effort by the Forest Service Eastern Region to engage and build relationships with our urban neighbors. Our aim is to bridge the gaps between rural communities and city dwellers and to involve underrepresented urban audiences in Forest Service activities. *Urban Connections* also aims to build on existing urban outreach efforts of Eastern national forests and connect to other urban involvement, education, research, and development work in the East, the South, and throughout the Forest Service and the United States.



## Just the facts

In Detroit, The Greening of Detroit's Conservation Leadership Corps is training 20 high school students to perform forest inventories.



## Eastern Region, Michigan

*We have established a great partnership with the USDA Forest Service. Now I can say it takes a village, a museum, and a forest to raise a child!*

—Cora Christmas, Principal, Henry Ford Academy



### Just the facts

Each year, nearly 2 million people visit The Henry Ford, a venue for American history and education in Detroit, where the Forest Service Eastern Region's *Urban Connections* program distributes an average of 30,000 native seedlings every year, along with planting instructions and information about the Forest Service.



*The Urban Connections program reaches people throughout the Eastern United States.*



# Urban Kids Connecting in Washington, DC



*The Urban Tree House program introduces kids to nature in the Nation's Capital.*

As residents of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, kids in the Nation's Capital are exploring nature right in their own backyards and in the rivers that flow through their city.

During the summer of 2008, children in Washington, DC, boarded boats to ride to the 1,200-acre Anacostia Park (part of the National Park Service), where they spent the day exploring the abundance of butterflies, wildflowers, birds (including bald eagles), wetland plants, fish, and shellfish on this century-old strip of parkland along the tidal Anacostia River. In the city's Aquatic Education Center at the park, kids got a close look at creatures that live in the river and the Chesapeake Bay. They were "all hands" as they participated in hands-on activities, including a river ecology boat trip on the Anacostia river, where they learned about pollution problems; a water pollution activity in which they learned about

Five Washington, DC, schools will pilot a national GreenSchools! Initiative of the American Forest Foundation, the parent organization of *Project Learning Tree*, in partnership with the Forest Service. As a result of a 2-year Forest Service agreement, the program will provide training and funding for diverse and underserved PreK-12 public schools. Students and teachers will investigate environmental issues at their schools and engage with their community in ongoing service-learning projects that create green and healthy learning environments.



*DC kids explored Anacostia National Park with the Urban Tree House Program.*



# With Nature

Washington Office, Washington, DC

## Just the facts

In the summer of 2008, 300 kids from DC schools, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the DC Metropolitan Police Youth Advisory Council Summer Camps explored Anacostia Park in Washington, DC, an opportunity made possible through the Anacostia *Urban Tree House* partnership and a grant from the DC Department of the Environment, which provided bus transportation for the field trip.



Forest Service interns help bring education activities to children in Washington, DC.

the tie between healthy watersheds and human health; an opportunity to hold a turtle; and game playing, in which they learned about watersheds and the Leave No Trace program. They learned what kids can do to help preserve the watershed in which they live, learn, and play. The children thank the Anacostia *Urban Tree House* partnership, which conducted these watershed education field trips.

During the school year, DC students team up with teachers and maintenance staff to explore ways to improve recycling, energy and water conservation, and schoolyard greening. As part of the *Green Schools!* initiative, these kids have become sleuths, conducting GSIs (*Green Schools Investigations*) to find and fix deficiencies that will create a healthier school environment. Their teachers also benefit from the program, receiving environmental education training and grants for service-learning projects. The Forest Service Washington Office staff works with *Project Learning Tree* to empower the kids and their grown-up counterparts as they work to make their schools more environmentally friendly.

*Today we celebrate new hope in America. When communities get involved, we can work together with schools and their students to make the environment better for us all.*

— Safiya Samman, Director of Conservation Education,  
Forest Service, speaking in Washington, DC

For more information, visit  
[http://www.plt.org/cms/pages/36\\_124\\_184.html](http://www.plt.org/cms/pages/36_124_184.html).

*For children who are always surrounded by concrete to be able to go to a park and receive environmental education, it can be a magical experience. It opens their eyes to a whole new world that they may have never realized existed.*

— Corinna Kirkland-Caplan (2006 and 2007 intern)



# Pass the Gift to the Next Generation

Throughout the country, young people are stepping up to the challenge to commit their lives and professional goals to preserving the environment and the Earth they live on. The Forest Service and its partners are connecting kids with nature. They are passing the gift to kids—the next generation. Some of these kids are teaching other children. Some kids are finding their career interests sparked on forest trails. All these kids are spreading environmental literacy. It's contagious.

## Just the facts

In 2008, two of the five most common topic areas in the Forest Service Conservation Education programs were ecology and forest health.



*Supervisors of the Washington, DC, Green Summer Jobs program learn about invasive weeds.*

# Milwaukee's Conservation Education Intern Team



*Interns helped kids make connections with their natural resources.*

Four teenage student interns in Milwaukee, WI, spent the summer of 2008 employed as conservation educators through the Eastern Region's *Conservation Education Intern Program*. They shared nature programs and activities with urban youth throughout the city, helping kids make "urban connections" with natural resources, environmental issues, and stewardship. They encouraged children to explore nature in their own backyards and to make the connection between the value of those resources and those of the country's Federal lands. While taking the kids on trips to Milwaukee's *Urban Tree House*, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Neighborhood Centers, the Children's Museum, and the State Fair, the intern team conducted hands-on activities and programs on habitats, forests, recycling, energy, invasive species, pollution, resource management, water, and stewardship. The summer of 2008 marked the 13th time the Eastern Regional Office hosted a team of four Student Temporary Employment Program students as a Conservation Education Intern Team.

The goal of the *Conservation Education Intern Program* is to interact with urban youth from diverse backgrounds, providing insight about natural resources, environmental issues, stewardship, and careers in natural resource fields. The program strives to help urban youth make a connection between natural resources in their own community and Federal lands.

*This program has shown me that it is relatively easy to inspire children to think about the world around them. I had hoped this summer that I would be able to inspire children to appreciate nature around them, but what I hadn't expected is how much the children would inspire me.*

— Jeff Kyle (2007 and 2008 intern)



# on Students

Eastern Regional Office, Wisconsin

*The Conservation Education Intern Program has shown me the importance of environmental education in urban areas. Children today are lacking knowledge of natural areas, as well as wildlife and habitats that exist in them. The program has taught me how effortless it is to make environmental education enjoyable and fascinating.*

— Heather Kohlmeier (2006–08 intern)



*With partners like Trout Unlimited, Milwaukee Youth learned to enjoy the great outdoors.*

## Just the facts

In 2008, a team of 4 student interns taught 3,500 Milwaukee kids about natural resources, environmental issues, and stewardship.



*The Conservation Education Intern Program works with partners to connect urban kids with nature.*

# Kids Go Green



*Generation Green made a difference in the participants' lives.*

In a new program called the *Generation Green of Lake Tahoe Program*, seven students from low-income, diverse, or "youth-with-a-barrier" backgrounds, most of whom had never hiked the forests that surround their neighborhoods, began a new summer experience by backpacking on forest trails. Many said it was the hardest thing they had ever done, physically, emotionally, and mentally. During this week-long journey, they bonded as a crew and grew comfortable in the outdoor environment. After backpacking, they continued with 7 weeks of Forest Service employment. By the end of the summer, they had made new friends, gained leadership and job skills, learned about the complexities of natural resource management, and established life-long connections to the land.

The students were so inspired by their experience that they started the *Generation Green of Lake Tahoe Club* at South Tahoe High School. They are now leading others to hike and backpack in the forest and to be volunteers. Twenty-three of these students attended a Society of American Foresters' conference. Several volunteered as docents for the Forest Service at the Taylor Creek visitor center. Many provided service projects for the community, such as planting bulbs at an elementary school and participating in community events. They are rapidly gaining the reputation as leaders in the community. On weekends they take their friends hiking or backpacking, rather than sitting inside, watching television or playing video games. What started as a program to reach 7 students has expanded to 35 active members of the club. The success of this program has gone far beyond any original expectations.

This program succeeded because many hands from many partners worked together. The Forest Service Central California Consortium helped the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit create the program. The El Dorado County Workforce

The purpose of the student intern program was to connect students to the beauty found in the Lake Tahoe area, to increase their understanding of forest management, and to connect them to potential Forest Service mentors and Forest Service careers.



## Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, California

*Our students learned that they make a difference.  
They embraced their roles as stewards of the land.*

— Joy Barney, Conservation Education Program Specialist at the  
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the crew's supervisor

Investment Act provided funding for qualified students. South Tahoe High School provided guidance and support, and they recruited the students. The Tahoe Rim Trail Association provided the use of backpacks and equipment. Lake Tahoe Community College provided instruction and college credits for the backpack course. Through these partners, the *Generation Green* program met the needs of the community and the Forest Service by providing job skills and opportunities, teaching a diverse community about taking care of their natural resources, and exposing nontraditional youth to recreation opportunities.

For more information, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/lbmu/education/green.shtml>.



### Just the facts

Approximately 100 kids attended three *Project Learning Tree* training sessions. Of the attendees, 30 were high school students from the *Generation Green Club*. After the training, 16 volunteered to help us with Conservation Education programs in the classroom. We presented *Trees are Terrific* programs to more than 1,500 students in kindergarten through fifth grade in all four South Tahoe Elementary Schools via a GreenWorks grant to the club.

*Through the Generation Green program, seven Lake Tahoe youth spent the summer learning about the Great Outdoors.*



*The teens who served as teachers were excellent: their stories of how they came to be a part of the program, their family histories and their goals were inspiring for our students, many of whom have limited opportunities similar to the ZAP [Zoo Animal Presenters] teens.*

*— Urban Nature Overnight 2008 Annual Report*



# Camp and Learn in the Woods

Kids know how to have fun when they learn. While camping, hiking, swimming, and boating, they soak up the environment around them and learn about the natural resources of the land and water that provide endless hours of outdoor fun. Playing in the woods encourages kids to connect with nature.



## Just the facts

The Forest Service manages 193 million acres of National Forest System lands, an area larger than the State of Texas. That's a lot of woods for kids to play in.



# RAP Camp

## No Lyrics at this RAP



*Students work with national resource professionals at the RAP Camp.*

*RAP Camp provides the opportunity for students and teachers to discover the great outdoors, interact with natural resource professionals for career insights, and have fun.*

Every summer since 1992, children from rural and urban areas in California, Oregon, and Washington have been hiking, birding, swimming, and canoeing as they learn about fire ecology, wildlife, forestry, fisheries, archeology, rangeland management, wetlands, and botany at *RAP Camp—Resources and People (RAP) at Camp Esther Applegate* on the shore of Lake of the Woods in Oregon, near Klamath Falls. These kids soak up the environment in natural resource workshops, outdoor recreation activities, educational field trips, and a career fair.

Sponsoring partners of the camp are the Fremont-Winema National Forests, the Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District, Modoc National Forest, and T.E.A.C.H., Inc. (Training, Employment, and Community Help). More than two dozen organizations contribute financial support to the program.

Since the camp's inception, Shirley Kerns, Fremont-Winema National Forests, has coordinated the yearly summer program. In 2007 the Pacific Northwest Region recognized her enduring commitment to natural resource education with the Regional 2007 Gifford Pinchot Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education award.

For more information, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/frewin/news/special-projects/rapcamp/rapcamp.shtml>.



### Just the facts

Kids in California, Oregon, and Washington know just how lucky they are to have Shirley Kerns behind the helm of Camp RAP. In 2007, grownups of the Pacific Northwest Region also recognized Shirley's enduring commitment to natural resource education with the Regional 2007 Gifford Pinchot Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education award.



# Camp

Freemont-Winema National Forests, Oregon



## Just the facts

Since 1992, more than 800 kids ages 13 through 18 have attended RAP Camp near Klamath Falls in Oregon.

*Since 1992 youth have learned about natural resources during the annual RAP Camp.*



*Shirley [Kerns] has been devoted to getting 'more kids in the woods' long before it became a national initiative for the Forest Service. She has reached out to both rural and urban youth and teachers from diverse ethnic backgrounds to share natural history, science, and ecology of the beautiful Klamath Basin.*

— Karen Shimamoto, Forest Supervisor of the Fremont-Winema National Forests.

# Urban Nature Overnight—Bats and Oh My!



*Kids crowd the camera at the beginning of their Urban Nature Overnight.  
(Photo courtesy of Oregon Zoo)*

Kids in Oregon know when bats or bears are their nighttime neighbors. These kids are camping overnight at the Oregon Zoo and other offsite locations to learn about Eagle Creek Recreation Area in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and current resource management issues. They learn about and experience salmon life cycle and habitat improvement, camping and trail etiquette, Native American history, natural and geologic history of the Gorge, and fire prevention.

For the past 9 years, the *Urban Nature Overnight (UNO)* program has provided these fun learning opportunities for students—particularly underserved urban youth who have not previously had access to outdoor experiences. In addition, UNO now invites children for year-round environmental education programs in partnership with youth service providers in the greater Portland area, Roosevelt High School, the Oregon Zoo, National Forest Foundation, Bureau of Land Management, and Forest Service.

*The Urban Nature Overnight program provides a brief introduction to forest and riparian areas, anadromous fish, and fire suppression/prevention; exposes underserved urban youth to jobs in natural resources; and increases nature-appropriate interactions by urban populations visiting the scenic area.*

*For our kids it was inspiring to see minorities, women, and other youth role models have such responsibilities and skills.*

—Urban Nature Overnight 2008 Annual Report

*Kids in the UNO program have the chance to learn about nature nearby through overnights at the Oregon Zoo. (Photo illustrates activities, but is not from the UNO project.)*





# Camping and Bears...

Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Oregon



## Just the facts



Over the past 9 years, more than 400 inner-city kids have slept outdoors in the Urban Nature Overnight program in Portland, OR.

UNO has inspired me in so many ways. I always had an interest in nature but I didn't know how to explore it on my own. Now I see the world in a different way. I spend more time outside and I bring my family with me. I want to teach the current ZAPs [Zoo Animal Presenters] and program participants to love nature the way I was taught through ZAP and UNO.

—Cynthia Barron, ZAP member 2002–2005,  
UNO equipment coordinator 2007,  
UNO assistant coordinator 2008.



Through overnight adventures, children learn about natural resources and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

 *Trae un mensaje muy importante de como podemos ser mas fuertes, naturalmente. [Amigos del Bosque]*  
*sent an important message of how we can be stronger naturally.* 

—54-year-old woman originally from the Dominican Republic  
(34 years in the United States)



# Bring the Forest to Our Diverse Communities

Kids' lives are enriched when they cross cultural boundaries to explore the natural resources they share with other kids whose languages or customs differ from their own. Whether they live in Texas or Idaho or in Alaska, California, or Oregon, young people who share in the message of conservation have common goals and priorities. Forest Service programs bring the forest to diverse communities, where kids have fun connecting with nature and with one another.



# Idaho National Forest *Inter-Tribal Youth*

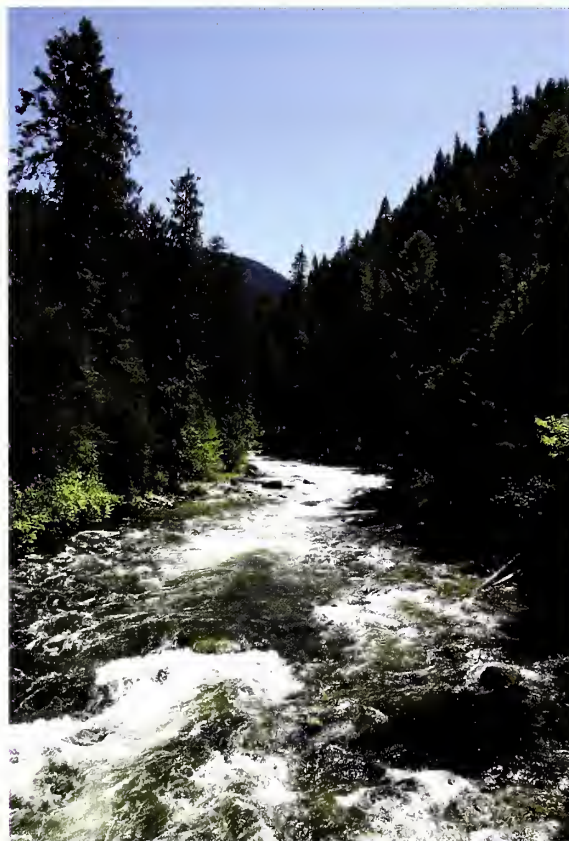


*Tribal youth from five tribes learn about natural resources at the annual camp.*

In 2008, kids at the annual *Inter-Tribal Youth Natural Resource Camp* at Canyon Work Center on the North Fork Ranger District in Idaho used digital cameras, laptop computers, and software to conduct a variety of surveys from which they developed interactive reports, incorporating photos, graphic maps, and sound to describe what they had learned.

The students were grateful to the Clearwater National Forest and Nez Perce Tribe, co-hosts of the 21st annual week-long camp, for the opportunity to explore the world around them and to record what they learned in a meaningful and high-tech way. Five national forests (Clearwater, Colville, Idaho Panhandle, Nez Perce, and Payette) and five tribes (Coeur d'Alene, Kalispel, Kootenai, Nez Perce, and Spokane) sponsor the event, which rotates to a different location each summer. For the 2008 camp, the Forest Service broke new ground by launching the pilot program, "Pictures With a Purpose," which integrates technology into the education experience.

The mission of the *Inter-Tribal Youth Natural Resource Camp* is to provide a fun, hands-on learning environment for our campers that allows them the opportunity to see and experience first hand what our natural resource technicians and professionals do on a typical day.



*The Inter-Tribal Youth Natural Resource Camp rotates between five national forests. In 2008, it was held in the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho.*



# Natural Resource Camp

Clearwater National Forest, Idaho



## Just the facts

The annual *Inter-Tribal Youth Natural Resource Camp* has hosted summer opportunities for kids for 21 years.

*Camp participants try out traditional hunting weapons such as the atlatl.*



*Tribal youth at the summer camp learn about the rich natural resources of the Nez Perce National Forest.*

# ¿Se habla Español?



*Multnomah Falls is part of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.*

**D**uring the summer of 2008, two bilingual students worked as part of the staff at Multnomah Falls to provide interpretive services in Spanish and English and to guide hikes 4 days each week to help Spanish-speaking visitors explore the habitat of the area.

These students helped managers at the Columbia River Gorge reach a more diverse cross section of visitors and helped the visitors enrich their experiences and connections with nature through guided hikes. In addition, the staff appreciated the diversification of the seasonal workforce, saying the bilingual students shared their culture while working for the Forest Service.

For more information, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/columbia/>.

The purpose of the Columbia River Gorge bilingual program is to reach a more diverse section of visitors to Multnomah Falls to provide them with natural history and leave-no-trace messages.

*We saw a significant decline in violations such as cutting switchbacks, litter, and the illegal picking of forest plant life in this demographic of people.*

—Aaron Pedersen, site manager, Multnomah Falls, OR,  
regarding the value of bilingual interpretive services for visitors.





## Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Oregon

*We are able to make a connection between the kids, the parents, and us, instead of just speaking to the kids in English.*

—Staff at Multnomah Falls, OR, regarding the value of bilingual interpretive services for visitors.



### Just the facts

Every year, more than 2.5 million people visit Multnomah Falls on the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area in Oregon.



*Bilingual students answered questions and provided interpretive programs at Multnomah Falls.*





# Latino Legacy: *Amigos del Bosque*



*Texas children learn about natural resources in the Amigos del Bosque program.*

The purpose of *Amigos del Bosque* is to build place-based connections of youth through family experiences with forest lands.

Kids and their families in Texas are receiving conservation messages through music, dance, art, activities, and events through the bilingual *Amigos del Bosque* (Friends of the Forest) outreach team of the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas. *Amigos del Bosque* and the *Bosque Móvil* (Forest Mobile) bring the forest to the people by providing hands-on learning experiences and interpretive programs based on local conservation issues, and they invite the people to the forest. In 2009, thousands of Conroe and Houston schoolchildren will get their first visits to national and State forests to participate in hands-on outdoor experiences.

This network of innovative partnerships with Latino organizations and community and grassroots leaders has fostered a sense of trust and built higher levels of environmental awareness and stewardship for the children and their families. Partners include the Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas Forest Service, Houston and Conroe Independent School Districts, Conroe Hispanic Task Force, and El Grupo Nuevo León.

For more information, visit <http://www.latinolegacy.org>.



## Just the facts

The Latino population is the fastest growing ethnic segment in the Southeastern United States.



*The Bosque Móvil brings the forest to Texas children.*



## National Forests and Grasslands in Texas

### Just the facts

In 2008, 60,000 kids and their families learned about conservation of public lands through *Amigos del Bosque*.



Texas children learn about the forests and grasslands in their own backyard.



*Yo creo que como lo hicieron conmigo me sentí en confianza.  
I felt more confident because of how they [Amigos del Bosque]  
were with me.*

— 36-year-old woman originally from Tamaulipas, Mexico  
(12 years in the United States)

# Yanshuka Culture Camp



*Preparing older branches for a traditional smoke house.*

For the first time, in 2008, kids from Alaska and the “Lower 48” gathered around fresh-caught salmon to listen and watch tribal elders instruct them in the traditional techniques for catching and processing this rich staple food of their Baranof Island, Alaska home. They watched and listened as elders and Forest Service specialists in education and fisheries demonstrated the importance of healthy streams and waters, nutrient cycling, and the value of this keystone species to the health of interrelated ecosystems. These 5 high school students from Sitka, AK, and 13 students from San Diego, CA, had come together to learn from each other and to learn about the natural environment and natural resource management at *Yanshuka Culture Camp*—an education program in which youth can gain a new appreciation of their elders and their traditional cultural and natural surroundings.

The camp, which serves 25 to 30 youth in 3 programs each summer and which focuses on environmental literacy and cultural sensitivity, was named *Yanshuka* (pronounced yan shu KA, with the emphasis on the last syllable) —a Tlingit word for a “summer encampment for extended families for the purposes of gathering and preparing traditional foods.” The name fosters the idea that sustainable traditions can be shared and passed along through the generations. Partners included the Sitka Conservation Society, Dog Point Fish Camp, North American Traditional Indian Values Enterprise, and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

*Yanshuka Culture Camp* provides a way to renew Native Alaskan lifestyle and philosophy and to teach respect for the environment and each other.



## Tongass National Forest, Alaska

### Just the facts

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska is a federally recognized government that serves 4,000 tribal citizens who are primarily of Tlingit, Haida, Aleut, and Tsimpsian heritage. The tribal government of the Sheet'-Ka' area encompasses all of Baranof Island and the southern and western half of Chichagof Island in the Alexander Archipelago of southeastern Alaska.




*The Yanshuka Culture Camp ties Alaska Native youth to their rich subsistence culture.*



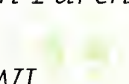
*Sitka black-tailed deer are an important part of southeast Alaska's subsistence lifestyle.*

*The project melded two concepts that have long been inseparable in southeast Alaska: cultural activity and respect for the land.*

—Roby Littlefield, owner and founder of Dog Point Fish Camp



*Students from Washburn Public Schools helped natural resource professionals evaluate drainage and other ecological conditions at their planned schoolyard restoration site during the October 2008 Earth Partnership for Schools workshop in Ashland, WI.*





# Use Technology To Access Forest Service Sciences

Kids who might otherwise not have access to Forest Service science are becoming forest science sleuths, thanks to programs that use technology to bring distant places and concepts to their classrooms. Some are cultivating native plant gardens in their schoolyards. Others are becoming tuned in to the issues surrounding climate change. Still others are participating in virtual travel to Mexico with the monarch butterfly. Although the Forest Service strives to move children away from the computer and into the woods, the agency recognizes the power of technology for motivating kids to connect with nature.



## Just the facts

In 2008, the Forest Service worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the University of Michigan to launch MEERA (My Environmental Education Resource Assistant), a free, Web-based tool used to evaluate the effectiveness of conservation education programs. Visit <http://meera.snre.umich.edu>.



*The Forest Service makes innovative use of technology to bring the forest to kids—and kids to the forest.*

# Schoolyard Habitats Across Wisconsin



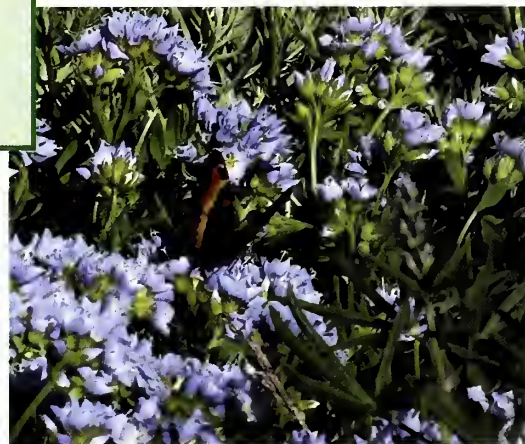
In 2008, kids began creating native plant gardens on school grounds in Wisconsin and will continue working with their gardens through 2011 as part of the *Schoolyard Habitats Across Wisconsin—Sowing the Seeds of Environmental Literacy and Stewardship* project. They started planting because of a 2-year agreement between the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest's Lakewood-Laona Ranger District, the Nicolet Distance Education Network, and two elementary schools to create native plant gardens at district offices while connecting students with the land around their communities. This program, with *More Kids in the Woods* funding, has blossomed into a multischool project involving two districts, the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, the Eastern Region's Urban Connections Program, and 12 external partners across the State, all united in their desire to return native landscapes to children's lives.

Motto for  
*Schoolyard Habitats  
Across Wisconsin:*

Sowing the seeds of  
environmental literacy  
and stewardship.

Mission of *Schoolyard Habitats Across Wisconsin* brings together K-12 teachers and natural resource professionals to engage students in life-long learning activities that—

- Excite them about nature and the outdoors through hands-on experiences.
- Introduce them to the environmental sciences through habitat restoration in their schoolyards and communities.
- Help them communicate about their discoveries by integrating science, arts, and the humanities.



*Students created native plant gardens in Wisconsin.*



## Chequamegon—Nicolet National Forests, Wisconsin

*How much of an impact could a nature-based curriculum have on our children? I think the effects can and will be far reaching. It is time to put the pieces of the puzzle back together, to recreate that sense of belonging and wonderment of the world around us. After all, don't we as adults have the responsibility to offer our children similar opportunities to learn and understand our relationship with nature? The institute has offered the tools; it is up to us to use them.*

— Northwest Wisconsin teacher who attended Earth Partnership for Schools 2-week RESTORE Institute in Madison, July 2008



### Just the facts

Across Wisconsin, 18 schools are involved in at least one aspect of the *Schoolyard Habitats Across Wisconsin* program.



Wisconsin students worked with partners to create schoolyard habitats.

The students receive guidance for establishing the schoolyard habitats from curriculum-based field trips and activities. Thanks to the program, children also receive student internships, use interactive television for student preparation and sharing, participate in community mural activities, and produce a video and book about their experiences. Through distance learning, children are forging an urban-rural connection and preparing for a 2011 Student Summit, while their teachers and other educators are receiving training to form a new Earth Partnership for Schools to support school habitat restorations.

In 2008, four student interns earned a stipend and science credit while helping Lakewood-Laona District personnel monitor nest boxes, restore trout habitat, treat nonnative invasive plants, and survey for wolves, black terns, and the State-endangered northern blue butterfly. With ecosystems as the backdrop, kids explored, discovered, and participated in hands-on learning while on field trips to collect native plant seeds for their schoolyard habitats. Kids in the Ashland and Milwaukee areas are participating in similar activities as they undertake this seed-sowing project of learning and stewardship.

For more information, visit  
<http://uwarboretum.org/eps/>.

# Climate Change



*Conservation Education Director Safiya Samman helps Miner Elementary School students in Washington, DC, plant a dogwood tree in their outdoor classroom.*

Kids throughout the United States are gaining a better understanding about the effects of climate change on their environment thanks to Forest Service Chief Emeritus, Abigail Kimbell, who identified kids and climate change as two of three challenges facing our forests and grasslands, along with the third challenge—water. To address the need for knowledge and awareness about climate change, she started in her own backyard by designating a Forest Service awareness day on climate change for all employees. Throughout the agency, organizations initiated multiple efforts similar to the Climate Change in the Southern Region Web site that the Southern Research Station created. It provides information on upcoming climate change seminars, climate-related reading materials, regional and agency climate initiatives, and tips for reducing one's carbon footprint.

Children benefit from these efforts through several climate-related projects that the Conservation Education program conducted.

## Teachers warm up to teach climate change

Kids are benefiting from what 200 educators learned at a July 2008 conference on climate change, sponsored by the Forest Service and its partners from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and Sally Ride Science. The educators heard Forest Service scientists deliver presentations and participated in their workshops on climate change topics, all of which provided educators with resources to help them teach this important topic to their students. The educators have continuous access to the conference because, through its partnership with the Prince William Network, the Forest Service also made available a live Web-cast and archived Web videos of the conference and proceedings.

## Climate change literacy may be coming to a school in your neighborhood

Kids in grades K through 12 may soon be participating in education activities that promote climate change literacy. The Climate Change Science Program Education Interagency Working Group is developing a strategic plan that will provide a cohesive climate literacy framework to promote climate science literacy among the public. This plan will build on the individual relationships each Federal agency has with its stakeholders and will also support efforts outside the Federal Government. Agencies will disseminate climate change science findings and products to the public through a variety of traditional and nontraditional means, including providing scientifically sound content for K–12 education activities.





## Just the facts

Approximately 300 science teachers attended the National Science Teachers Association Climate Change Symposium and related workshops and webinars.

### Climate change toolkit for educators available on line

Some middle school students are learning about climate change because of a toolkit that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in partnership with seven other Federal agencies, including the Forest Service, developed. The goal of the *Climate Change, Wildlife, and Wildlands Toolkit*, which is available online for classroom teachers and nonformal educators, is to help middle school teachers and nonformal educators teach students about how climate change is affecting our Nation's wildlife and public lands and how everyone, even kids, can become a "climate steward." The toolkit includes case studies on eastern and western forests that highlight Forest Service research and climate change educational resources.

### Natural Inquirer provides climate change resources to kids

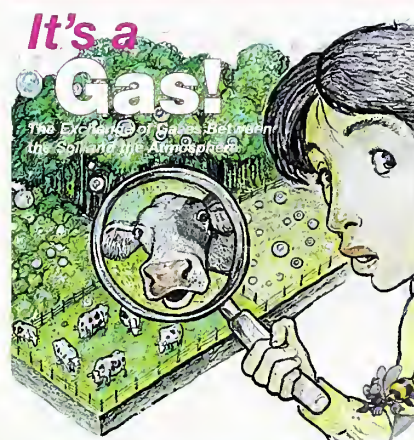
The Conservation Education program has added climate change resources to the *Natural Inquirer*, a science education journal for students. See a description of the "Climate Change" education collection in the *Natural Inquirer* write-up in the "Bring Forest Service Science to Teachers and the Classroom" section of this report.

### Climate literacy brochure—

#### *The Essential Principles of Climate Science*

Students whose teachers have access to the new version of the *Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Sciences*, a guide developed by NOAA through the U.S. Global Change Science Program, have great opportunity to become young scientists and environmental stewards. Teachers use the guide as part of their science curricula to present important information to help kids understand Earth's climate, impacts of climate change, and approaches for adapting and mitigating change. They use principles in the guide as discussion starters or launching points for scientific inquiry.

Kids benefit from the multidisciplinary contributions to the guide; its development began at a workshop sponsored by the NOAA and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Multiple science agencies, including the Forest Service, nongovernmental organizations, and numerous individuals also contributed through extensive review and comment periods. Discussion at the National Science Foundation and NOAA-sponsored Atmospheric Sciences and Climate Literacy workshop contributed substantially to the refinement of the document.



## Get Linked!

### Conference on Climate Change

[http://www.sallyridescience.com/for\\_educators/educator\\_institutes/08noaa0723](http://www.sallyridescience.com/for_educators/educator_institutes/08noaa0723)

### Climate change symposium for the National Science Teachers Association

[http://learningcenter.nsta.org/products/symposia\\_seminars/neworleans09/SRS/symposium.aspx](http://learningcenter.nsta.org/products/symposia_seminars/neworleans09/SRS/symposium.aspx)

### Climate Change, Wildlife, and Wildlands Toolkit

<http://globalchange.gov/resources/educators/toolkit>

### Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Sciences

[http://www.climate.noaa.gov/education/pdfs/climate\\_literacy\\_poster-final.pdf](http://www.climate.noaa.gov/education/pdfs/climate_literacy_poster-final.pdf)

# MonarchLIVE— A Distance Learning



A student learns about monarch butterflies during MonarchLIVE.

The goal of *MonarchLIVE—A Distance Learning Adventure* is to meet national science standards and promote conservation action through education and awareness.

Schoolchildren throughout the Western Hemisphere are getting “up close and personal” to the annual migration cycle of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), one of the most spectacular events in the insect world, when millions of delicate but hardy monarchs migrate thousands of miles from Canada and the United States to overwinter in just 12 mountain peaks in Michoacán, Mexico. Through *MonarchLIVE—A Distance Learning Adventure*, the children experience the magic of monarchs and their migration through a series of live, interactive, Web-based broadcasts and a rich Web site. The students learn about monarch life history, citizen science, and what they can do to help monarchs.

Through live broadcasts, students meet the Then-Chief of the Forest Service Abigail Kimbell, experience monarchs in their wintering forests in Michoacan, meet local Mexican villagers working to sustain the monarch forests, and meet kids in Chicago and Minneapolis who are making a difference for monarchs in their own backyards. Some students are creating pollinator gardens in their schoolyards through funding from *Project Learning Tree* GreenWorks grants, which the *MonarchLIVE* project also supports.

Kids in grades 4 through 8 are the core audience for the project, which is available free to classrooms and which provides resources in both English and Spanish. It also provides a wide range of extensions that will support both younger and older students’ participation.

*MonarchLIVE* is a project of Forest Service-International Programs, Forest Service-Conservation Education, National Forest Systems, Prince William Network, *Project Learning Tree*, and a host of agency and nongovernmental organization partners.

For more information, visit <http://monarch.pwnet.org>.



# Adventure

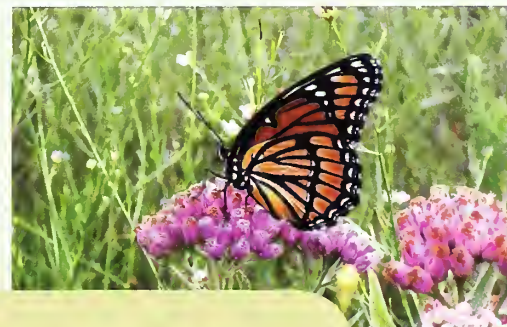
International

## Objectives

- Increase the understanding of monarch biology, life cycle, and ecology and the interdependence of the United States, Mexico, and Canada in the health of monarchs.
- Help schools and classrooms develop butterfly gardens and schoolyard habitats.
- Spotlight current monarch conservation and research being done by K-12 students, citizens, and university scientists.
- Increase participation in and understanding of monarch citizen science programs.

*We were out of school over 2 weeks and they came back to see things really devastated... each student being affected by the storm... and so far only about half the students have returned... studying the monarchs and taking part in the live broadcast and doing the migration activities with the paper butterflies... has really given them a chance to take their minds off what has happened and look towards things they can do...*

— A teacher on Galveston Island, TX



## Just the facts

So far, in the 2008–2009 school year, more than 400,000 children across the United States, Canada, and Mexico have participated in *MonarchLIVE*.



*Then-Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell and a host of kids and biologists were on-hand to kick off MonarchLIVE.*

*The Stream Watch volunteer program has had a huge, positive impact in bringing back the riparian habitat.*

—Kathleen Toth-Stauble, information assistant, who has been associated with the program since its inception



# Find the Forest in the Local Neighborhood

All across America, national forests bring the message of conservation to kids in their own neighborhoods. From forestry expos to fishing and from scouting to meeting former Presidents, children can take steps toward connecting with nature and becoming the country's future land stewards.



# Exploring the Elements: Earth, Water, and



The Forestry Expo introduces sixth-graders to forest management.

The primary goal of the *Forestry Expo* program is to educate children about natural resources, connect them to the forested environment of their region, and promote natural resource education.

During the *Forestry Expo* at the Priest River Experimental Forest, sixth-grade students rotated through a series of 10 educational, hands-on stations to make paper, dig through a trough of cedar chips, watch a Valmet Harvester and Forwarder work, and troop through the forest, identifying the major tree species in northern Idaho. The children also used an increment borer to take core samples, learning about forest health and tree growth. At a learning station called Fire in the Forest, kids watched as contained fires were started to demonstrate the characteristics of fire. They watched as a small, prescribed fire was started and then put out with a tanker truck.

In the Experimental Forest Museum, the students learned about the history of the forest and the forestry gadgets that were used in the past. Each student got up close to the weather station, which transmits all weather information for the Priest River area. The Priest Community Forest Connection, a nonprofit organization, sponsors and organizes the *Forestry Expo*.

For more information, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/rmrs/experimental-forests/priest-river-experimental-forest> or <http://www.communityforests.com>.



The Priest Community Forest Connection organizes the Forestry Expo.



# Fire

Rocky Mountain Research Station, Idaho



## Just the facts

More than 152 kids and adults—100 sixth-grade students, 5 teachers, 15 advanced forestry students, 32 volunteers, and a host of parent chaperones—experienced the day-long *Forestry Expo* at the Priest River Experimental Forest.

*Sixth-grade students learn about weather at the Forestry Expo.*

*Thank you for arranging the awesome field trip—  
it was so much fun.*

—a sixth-grader who experienced the *Forestry Expo*  
at the Priest River Experimental Forest.

# Bridger-Teton Partners Jackson a Whole Lot of



*Kids study the local aquatic environment in Jackson Hole, WY.*

Kids who participate in the *Jackson Hole More Kids in the Woods* program on the Bridger-Teton National Forest have fun while learning about forest issues, such as invasive species, fisheries/clean water, wildlife, wilderness management, water safety, trail use/repair, wildland fire topics, and stream restoration. They participated in a stream restoration project, studied macro-invertebrates, learned proper outdoor food storage techniques, went on a fishing trip, pulled weeds, helped install aquatic hitchhiker wash stations, reconstructed trails, removed fences in wildlife migration corridors, and rafted down the Snake River. Partners include the Jackson Hole Ski & Snowboard Club, Snake River Fund, Teton County Weed and Pest Association, Teton County Youth and Family Services, and Teton Science School.

The goal of the *Jackson Hole More Kids in the Woods* program is Healthy Kids—Healthy Watersheds.

A wider array of proposed activities awaits these kids: land art, unstructured playgroups, tree-climbing with a canopy specialist, family camping classes, and a youth congress. The congress would bring youth together in a structured setting to voice opinions, share visions, and identify new ideas related to their connection to nature. The children enjoy these opportunities and possibilities through the *Jackson Hole More Kids in the Woods* partnership, which began with Forest Service *More Kids in the Woods* funding in 2007. The partners focus on strengthening existing programs and developing new initiatives and alliances, such as a place-based and rural education summit that would attract cutting-edge specialists nationwide. New partners may include area tribes, libraries, and museums.

For more information, visit <http://www.jhkidsinthewoods.org/>.





# Make Fun

Bridger-Teton National Forest, Wyoming



Surrounded by the Grand Teton National Park and the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Jackson Hole, WY, is a gateway into the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

## Just the facts

In 2007, the first year of the program, 300 kids in 15 programs came to public lands through the *Jackson Hole More Kids in the Woods* program. In 2008, the number jumped to 500 kids in 25 programs.



Kids in the Jackson Hole More Kids in the Woods program tackled service projects like cleaning up campgrounds.

A typical [Healthy Kids—Healthy Watersheds program] might involve kids from a local Teton Youth and Family Services group home learning about stream flows planned by the Teton Science School, but taught by a Teton Conservation District hydrologist using model boats built from supplies provided by the Snake River Fund and created with help from the local Art Association.

—Gifford Pinchot Award-Winner, announced by Kristen Nelson,  
Forest Service, Washington Office, Interpretive Services

# The Tales That Fish Tell



For many kids, Fish Tales provides their first fishing adventure.

Children ages 8 through 12 are experiencing outdoor recreation and learning conservation and stewardship principles by fishing, creating arts and crafts, telling stories, and playing games. These kids are enjoying the activities of the Shawnee National Forest's *Fish Tales* program. Now in its ninth season, *Fish Tales* began in 2000 as a brainstorm between the Shawnee National Forest and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). It became reality in 2001 as a 2-day program, with fishing as a springboard, to provide meaningful outdoor recreation and learning experiences for young people in the rural, underserved communities of southern Illinois. The *Fish Tales* summer camp, held at Shawnee Community College, is designed to meet State of Illinois Educational Learning Standards.

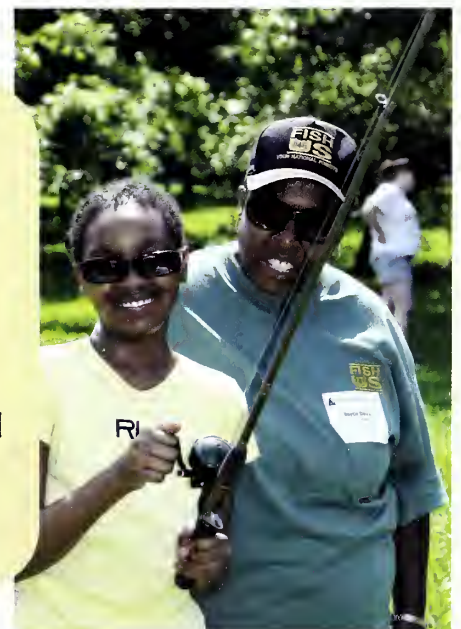
Kids benefit from the commitment of *Fish Tales* partners, including the USFWS, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Shawnee Community College, Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone, University of Illinois Extension, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Sierra Club, Regional Office of Education #02, Timberline Fisheries, and Vienna First United Methodist Church. The partners enrich the program by reaching more diverse and underserved communities; supplying fishing rods, reels, and safety glasses; and providing administrative volunteers.

The vision of the *Fish Tales* program is to involve children from underserved communities in environmental education, introducing them to environmentally healthy habits that will last them a lifetime, while enjoying a fun summer experience.



## Just the facts

*Fish Tales* has grown from 4 schools and 110 children participating to 13 schools, 2 educational organizations, and 300 kids.



The Forest Service sponsors kids fishing events throughout the Nation.



## Shawnee National Forest, Illinois

*We recognize the importance of the Fish Tales program in educating youth on the outdoors and in showing them there is more to life than television and video games. We at Timberline chose to be a part of Fish Tales because we see the program's concepts as valuable to the local communities. We are approached and asked to participate in many programs, but we are especially excited to be a partner in Fish Tales.*

— Bill Rosado, director of sales, Timberline Fisheries, Marion, IL

### Objectives of the Fish Tales Program

- Provide recreational opportunities to underserved children by teaching them how to fish.
- Use fishing as a springboard to teach the children conservation education concepts.
- Provide the children a positive experience and memories to carry with them throughout their lives.



Fish Tales summer camp builds the skills and knowledge to make fishing a life-long hobby.



Catching a fish is an experience a child will never forget.

### Just the facts

In 2001, *Fish Tales* had 5 partners.  
In 2008, the program has 10 partners.

# Education and Entertainment: That Work



Forest Service naturalists help visitors learn about natural resources and the Superior National Forest.

In Minnesota, kids and their families are enjoying traditional evening campfires, hiking in the cool mornings, touring lumber mills, and participating in craft activities—all the while, they are learning about conservation and gaining knowledge about the Superior National Forest.

Children are among the thousands of people who escape the summer heat by visiting the resorts along the North Shore of Lake Superior, which skirts the edge of the Superior National Forest. Since 1984, the Tofte Ranger District and the Lutsen-Tofte Tourism Association have cooperatively funded the *Resort Naturalist Program* to provide naturalist programs for these forest visitors. The programs are both entertaining and educational. The association provides program sites and funding, while the Forest Service hires two uniformed seasonal naturalists and provides equipment, training, and additional funding.

## *Resort Naturalist Program* mission statement:

To provide interpretive programs that will educate the public regarding natural resource issues and the Superior National Forest interpretive themes, thereby creating a more environmentally responsible and knowledgeable public that will foster a positive working relationship between the Forest Service and the public; to build partnerships with local resorts and businesses; and to provide and market natural resource conservation education as recreational opportunities in the vicinity of the Superior National Forest.



# Naturalist Programs for Everyone

Superior National Forest, Minnesota

Kids and their families learn about the differences between modern logging and unsustainable logging practices in the time of Paul Bunyan, the three species of wild cats found in Minnesota, and the complexity of ecosystems as demonstrated by wildflowers and invasive species. Although the programs take place at a resort, they are advertised and open to everyone, not just resort clients.

The conservation education content of this program is targeted to reach an audience often missed by other programs. Although many vacationers arrive in the area unaware they are in or near a national forest, they leave with a greater knowledge and appreciation of their public lands.

For more information, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/superior/recreation/naturalist.php>.



## Just the facts

In 2008, 2,600 people attended a series of 17 programs repeated weekly throughout the summer at the Superior National Forest.



*Resorts along the north shore of Lake Superior hosted a series of naturalist programs.*

# Watchin' the River Flow



Volunteers traverse a fragile riparian area protected by a boardwalk.

The purpose of *Stream Watch* is to educate the public about positive human/bear interactions and the importance of healthy riparian habitats and their relationship to healthy fish and wildlife populations.

Bob Dylan may have been content to sit on the bank and watch the river flow, but a group of dedicated volunteers has banded together to do more than simply watch. *Stream Watch* is a public contact and education program for kids and big kids that helps protect the riparian areas by educating visitors and anglers about reducing their impacts along the Kenai and Russian Rivers and the importance of healthy riparian habitats to healthy fish and wildlife. The program—which includes a cadre of volunteers, partners who provide funding and campsites, and other agencies that help coordinate the program on the lands they manage—also educates and increases awareness about bear/human interaction.

Partners monitor stream bank erosion, fencing, vegetation, fish-cleaning stations, and fishing-line recycling boxes. They understand that some rivers need to be actively protected to ensure that they provide future generations with the luxury to sit on a “bank of sand and watch the river flow” (Bob Dylan, *Watching the River Flow*, © 1971 by Big Sky Music).

*The Stream Watch volunteer program has had a huge, positive impact in bringing back the riparian habitat.*

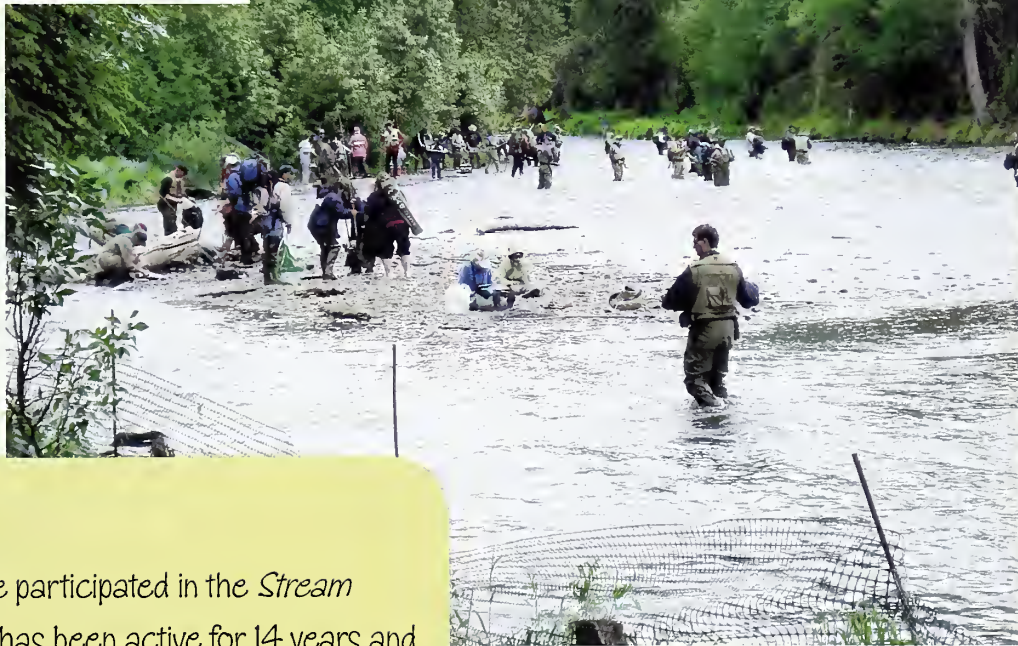
—Kathleen Toth-Stauble, information assistant, who has been associated with the program since its inception



## Chugach National Forest, Alaska



*Visitors to the Russian River in Alaska learn how to take care of the resource through interpretive and educational services.*



### Just the facts

In 2008, 4,087 people participated in the *Stream Watch* program, which has been active for 14 years and works with 4 partnering organizations.

*The Stream Watch program engages volunteers to care for one of the most heavily used sports fisheries in the Nation.*

# Linking Girls to the Land Across A Girl Scouts



*The Tongass National Forest is a land of forests and water.*

In Alaska, hundreds of Girl Scouts, aged 6 to 16, experienced the watershed around them on *Thinking Day* in February 2008. Linked by Forest Service videoconferencing equipment at Forest Service facilities across five islands and the mainland, the girls participated in activities that led them to a new appreciation of a land shaped by water in southeast Alaska.

The scouts learned that waters from these watersheds contribute to healthy streams and clean drinking water and that they provide transportation by ferry and barge. They came to understand that clean water is a resource that is precious to human health, but that it is often taken for granted in the temperate rain forests of southeast Alaska.

*Thinking Day* became an international event for the girls when, connected by long-distance telephone, they shared the day with Girl Guides in Africa. The scouts learned that most girls in Africa do not go to school because they spend their days carrying water to their villages. They became aware of the global repercussions of arid lands limited by clean water and access.

For more information, visit <http://www.epa.gov/adopt/linkinggirls/index.html>.

Linking Girls to the Land helps girls discover a strong sense of self, positive values, and an understanding of their important role in caring for the environment and our Earth's natural resources; connect with nature, the outdoors, and their local and global communities; and take action to identify community and environmental needs, positively impact the environment, and educate and inspire others to act as stewards of our Earth.

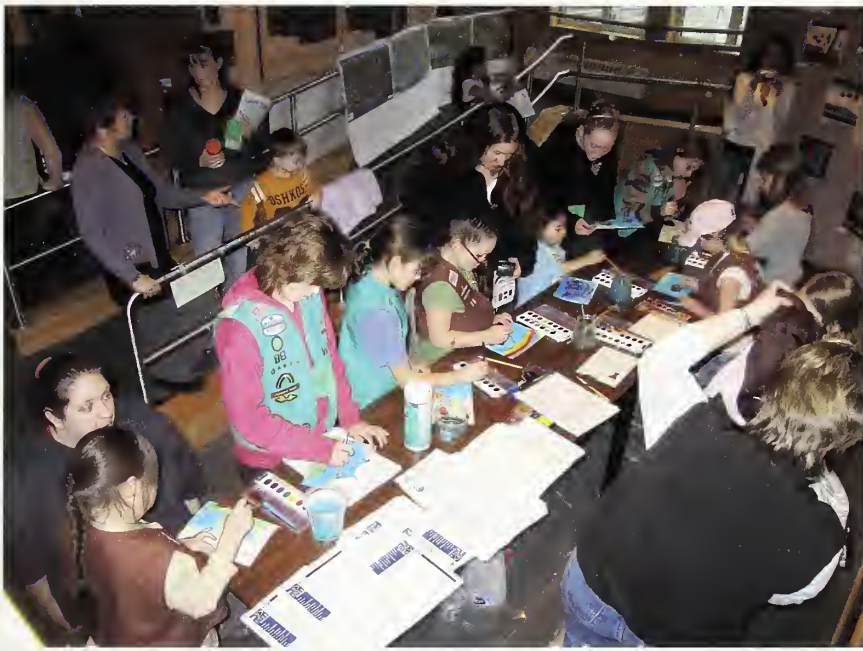
*Welcome to our personal watershed!*

—Opening words of scouts from Brownie Troop 59 in a movie they made about water in their lives and in the Tongass National Forest.

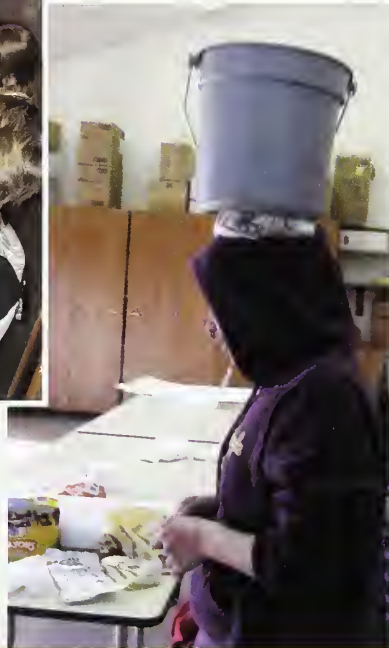


# the Tongass: *Thinking Day* Event

Tongass National Forest, Alaska



Girl Scouts from Ketchikan, AK, learned about watersheds on the Tongass National Forest.



## Just the facts

In 2008, the first year the program was in place on the Tongass National Forest, 200 girls participated in the *Thinking Day* activities on 6 of the forest's 10 ranger districts. A memorandum of understanding with the Tongass Alaska Girl Scout Council in Juneau, AK, supported the program.

# Teddy Roosevelt and Celebrating the



*Teddy Roosevelt established the Chippewa National Forest in 1908.*

More than 115 kids (and big kids) gathered at Norway Beach Recreation Area on the Chippewa National Forest to celebrate the forest's centennial with the 26th President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt. They applauded as "Teddy" came in with much fanfare and spoke to campers about his early days and the events that shaped his views on conservation. He reflected on the 230,000 acres of land his administration set aside, including the Minnesota National Forest (now known as the Chippewa National Forest), and he spoke about turn-of-the-century core virtues of courage, vision, and persistence. At the end of the speech, with all the kids cheering, a band played "Hail to the Chief," and Teddy disappeared into the pines.

During the Chippewa's 100th year, children enjoyed other programs, such as winter recreation days at the historic Shingobee Hills Recreation Area, a Civil(ian) Conservation Corps-built ski area, summer tours of Camp Rabideau, Anishinabe heritage and language programs at early childhood centers, and naturalist hikes to old-growth forests and the first ranger station east of the Mississippi River.

The core of the Chippewa National Forest was designated by the Forest Reserve Act in 1902.



*The Chippewa was the first national forest established east of the Mississippi River.*

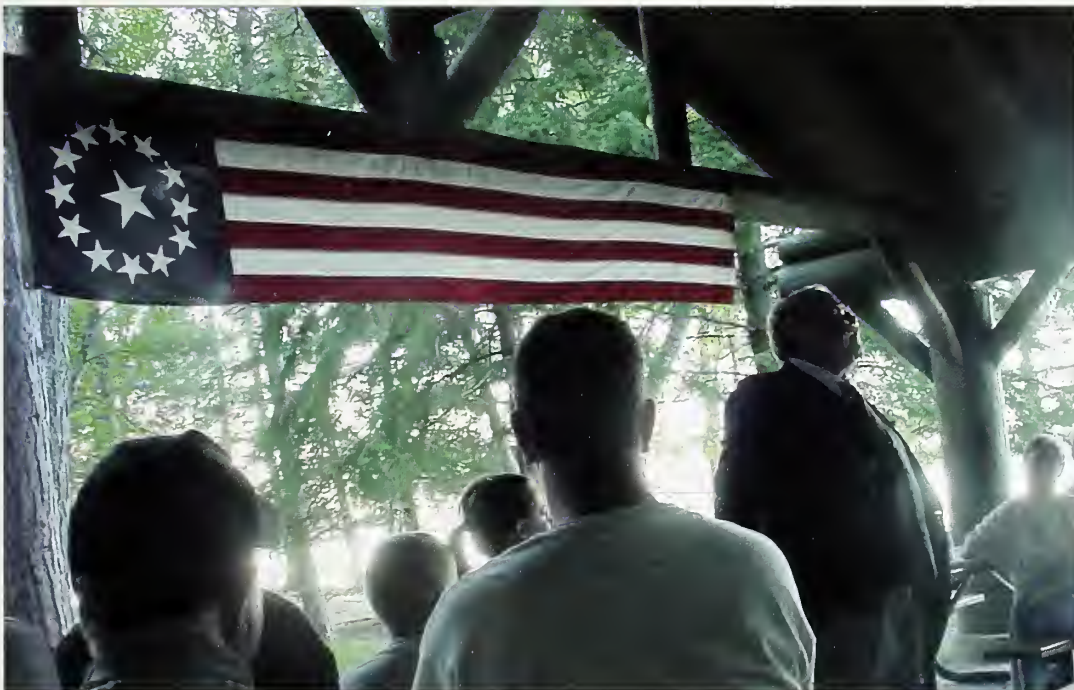


# Chippewa's Centennial

Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota

*It's an extraordinarily complex quilt work of ownerships and each of these lands is administered under different authorities with different emphasis. Yet to successfully get to those overarching issues of climate change, invasive species, energy, and making public lands relevant to urban constituents, we tackle the issues together. That was the effort that led the Minnesota Federation of Women's Groups to work to set aside this land, which would become the Chippewa National Forest.*

— Rob Harper, local newspaper



*Teddy Roosevelt was on hand to bring the history of the Chippewa National Forest to life.*

*The National Garden Clubs, Inc., has collaboratively worked with the USDA Forest Service to involve children with conservation as well as environmental protection of the land.*

—Barbara May, president, National Garden Clubs, Inc.



# Find the Forest Throughout America

Many nature-based programs are helping kids find forests throughout the country. The programs vary from educational and classroom programs to community festivals and garden clubs. In the midst of it all, children are becoming increasingly tuned in to nature and to their part in keeping the environment healthy.



## Just the facts

In 2008, the most common types of conservation education programs that the Forest Service offered were presentations, field trips, and classroom visits.



# NatureWatch



The NatureWatch program helps kids safely view fish, wildlife, and plants.

Through *NatureWatch* educational programs and community-based festivals, kids (and adults, too) can safely view fish, wildlife, and plants and their connection to ecosystems, landscapes, and people. They participate in activities that help them become more aware of the natural world they live in.

Kids enjoy many of the programs on national forests, which provide some of the finest nature viewing opportunities in the world. These forests also provide a focal point for *NatureWatch* efforts to encourage the appreciation and understanding of the natural world. For children, these viewing and learning opportunities help them understand their responsibility for their actions. The programs and activities also help them become advocates of proper and ethical behavior to help ensure that future generations can experience the wonders of nature.

For more information, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/>.

The mission of *NatureWatch* provides children and adults the opportunity to safely view and participate in activities and programs that raise their level of awareness and understanding of wildlife, fish, and plants and their connection to ecosystems, landscapes, and people.

The motto of  
*NatureWatch*:

Use your brain...,  
your perceptions.  
Use your imagination.



## Just the facts

Each year, more than 1,000 partners help *NatureWatch* deliver hundreds of educational programs and community-based festivals, many of which have won national-level awards.



For over 25 years, the Forest Service NatureWatch program has helped “Get Kids in the Woods.” By providing thousands of locations to view and appreciate wildlife, fish, and wildflowers, in concert with hundreds of educational projects, programs, and local festivals, millions of children are directly involved each year. The dedication and commitment of the work performed by thousands of partners, in cooperation with Forest Service biologists, botanists, and recreation/interpretive specialists, continues to be extraordinary.

—Donald J. Virgovic, National NatureWatch Program Leader

Forest Service NatureWatch viewing sites offer visitors unparalleled opportunities to view and appreciate wildlife, such as this black bear at the Anan Wildlife Observatory in southeast Alaska.

### NatureWatch 2008

839 projects/programs

1,078 partners

3 million people reached

36 new wildlife/fish/wildflowers viewing sites for children/adults



Through the NatureWatch program, kids learn about wildlife, fish, and plants in their national forests and grasslands.



### Just the facts

Wildlife, fish, and wildflower viewing has become the second most popular outdoor activity in the United States, second only to gardening, and nature-based tourism is a booming worldwide industry that is growing daily.

# National Symbols and Icons



Young children throughout the Nation are exposed at an early age to environmental literacy through the symbols of Woodsy Owl (America's lovable conservation icon, who reaches young children with his conservation messages and encourages them to experience nature) and Smokey Bear (one of the most recognized symbols worldwide, who reminds children that only they can prevent wildfires) and through the Junior Forest Ranger and Snow Ranger programs. These symbols and programs have come to life for many children through the National Symbols Program, a foundation of the Forest Service's education efforts.

Since 2003, the *National Symbols Program* has partnered with the Office of Head Start (Department of Health and Human Services) to reach the very young with important conservation ethics messages. Since then, the partnership has added the Woodsy Owl program to classrooms in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC.

The goal of the National Symbols Program is to assist fire prevention and conservation educators in the promotion of fire prevention and conservation messages through the production of educational and promotional materials highlighting Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl.

For more information about fire prevention, visit <http://www.smokeybear.com>.

Smokey Bear's Motto  
Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!  
Woodsy Owl's Mottos  
Give a Hoot! Don't Pollute!  
and  
Lend a Hand—Care for the Land.





## Just the facts

Thousands of children nationwide hear Smokey Bear's and Woodsy Owl's messages every year.

Nationwide



*Smokey Bear and the artist Wyland help kick off the FOCUS (Forests, Oceans, Climate, and Us) education project in Washington, DC.*

## Just the facts

Every year, more than 50,000 children in Head Start programs learn conservation practices through the Forest Service's partnership with the Office of Head Start.



## Just the facts

In 2008, 16,000 kids entered the annual Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl poster contest, a partnership event of the Forest Service and the National Garden Clubs, Inc.



# National Garden Clubs, Inc.



2008 National Garden Club, Inc., poster contest grand prize winner, Allison Marcom.

In 2008, more than 16,000 children nationwide participated in The Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl National Garden Clubs, Inc., poster contest. In this annual poster contest, first- to fifth-grade students illustrate their interpretation of the fire prevention message of Smokey Bear, *Only You Can Prevent Wildfires*, and Woodsy Owl's message of conservation, *Lend a Hand, Care for the Land*. Kids receive encouragement and guidance from their local Garden Clubs members, who work with elementary schools teachers, group leaders, and others to promote this conservation effort. The 2008 grand prize winner, Alisson Marcom, a fifth-grader from Dogwood Elementary School, Germantown, TN, received a trip to Washington, DC, for herself and her family.

For more information, visit <http://www.gardenclub.org/Youth/Contests/PosterContest.aspx>.

The purpose of The Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl National Garden Clubs poster contest is to raise awareness of the importance of fire prevention and conservation of the environment among elementary school children through their participation using Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl, America's icons for the prevention of wildfires and the conservation of the environment.



## Just the facts

The National Garden Clubs, Inc., which has clubs in 50 states and the National Capital Area, has 6,218 member garden clubs and 198,595 members.

*The National Garden Clubs, Inc., has collaboratively worked with the USDA Forest Service to involve children with conservation as well as environmental protection of the land. Through those joint efforts we have been able to reach across the Nation to garden clubs, which have turned to their young people to fulfill this important mission by participating in the Smokey Bear/Wodsy Owl poster contest.*

—Barbara May, president,  
National Garden Clubs, Inc



### Just the facts

The National Garden Clubs, Inc., a not-for-profit educational organization, is headquartered in St. Louis, MO.



Winning entries are chosen from each grade level, such as this first place entry from a first grader.

### Just the facts

The National Garden Clubs, Inc. also recognizes 447 International Affiliates from Canada to Mexico and South America and from Bermuda to South Africa, Australia, and Japan, as well as 149 National Affiliates within the United States.



Fifth-grader Allison Marcom's poster was chosen for top honors from more than 16,000 entries.

# More Kids in the Woods Challenge Cost-



*Kids throughout the Nation have new opportunities to get "in the woods."*

The *More Kids in the Woods Challenge Cost-Share Program*, initiated in 2007 by Forest Service Then-Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell when she challenged the Nation to strengthen its work with children, focuses on building partnerships and getting more resources on the ground to find innovative ways to get kids in the woods. The Forest Service provides the environment, and its partners not only bring the programs, recreational activities, and resources that make it happen, but they continue to develop new programs and expand existing activities to provide meaningful, hands-on experiences on public lands for hundreds of youth.

Although the projects take place across the country and focus on various curricula and experiences, Forest Service leadership and funding provide a common thread that enables partners to come together to touch the lives of many children. Many of these opportunities for kids are highlighted in this report and will be sustained into the future due to the commitment of sponsors and partners whose contributions have brought life to this program.

For more information, visit  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/emphasis/kidsprojects.shtml>.

The goal of the *More Kids in the Woods Challenge Cost-Share Program* is to effectively engage children in meaningful and sustained outdoor experiences, thereby increasing awareness and understanding of the natural world and the benefits of forest and grassland ecosystems.





# s — Share Program

Nationwide



The More Kids in the Woods program get kids outdoors learning new skills and knowledge.

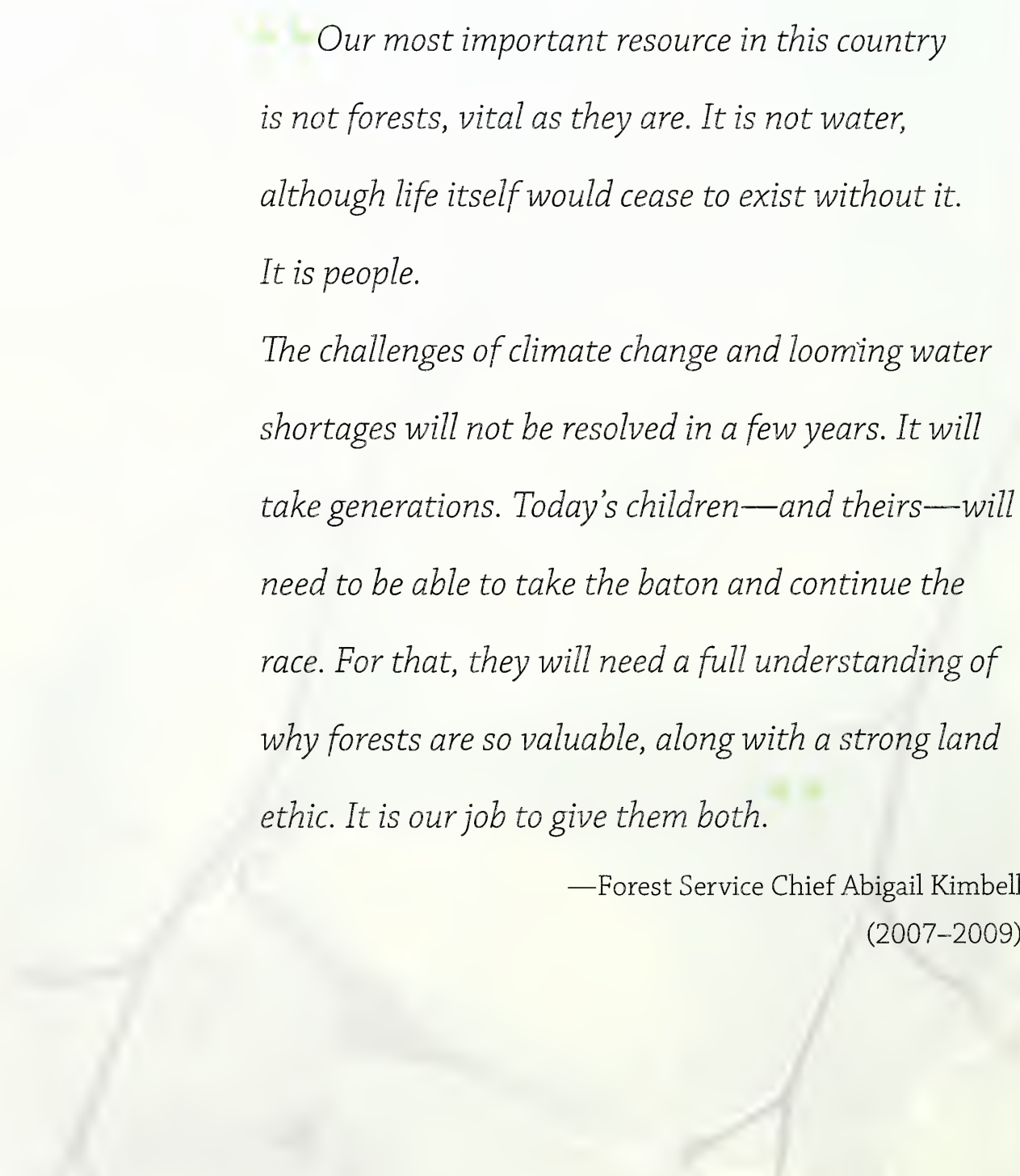
## Just the facts

In 2007, the *More Kids in the Woods Challenge Cost-Share Program* funded 24 projects nationwide. In 2008, the program funded 16 projects nationwide. A third round of projects was funded in 2009.



## Just the facts

Over 3 years, the Forest Service committed \$1.5 million to the *More Kids in the Woods Challenge Cost-Share Program*, and partners' contributions have more than matched the commitment.



*Our most important resource in this country is not forests, vital as they are. It is not water, although life itself would cease to exist without it. It is people.*

*The challenges of climate change and looming water shortages will not be resolved in a few years. It will take generations. Today's children—and theirs—will need to be able to take the baton and continue the race. For that, they will need a full understanding of why forests are so valuable, along with a strong land ethic. It is our job to give them both.*

—Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell  
(2007–2009)



# What's Next?

## Continuing the Momentum To Keep Our Forests Rich

Connecting kids to nature has a momentum that can't be stopped. Looking ahead, children will be getting to know their wild neighbors and teaming up with their neighbors all over the country for a national day outdoors. Kids will be the feature of a nationwide ad campaign and the focus of a traveling museum exhibit. What's next? *More kids in the woods*, respecting the woods, and, one day, working in the woods.



# National Get Outdoors Day



On June 14, 2008, kids (and their families) descended on more than 50 official *National Get Outdoors Day* sites across the Nation. From Anacostia Park in Washington, DC, to the Big Bear Discovery Center in the San Bernardino National Forest, American families experienced traditional and nontraditional types of outdoor activities, with some experiencing the joys and benefits of the great outdoors for the first time.

Building on the success of *More Kids in the Woods* and other important efforts to connect Americans—and especially children—with nature and active lifestyles, the Forest Service and American Recreation Coalition led this inclusive, nationwide effort focusing on a single day when people would be inspired and motivated to get outdoors for healthy, active outdoor fun. They partnered with Federal, State, and local agencies; key enthusiast organizations; and recreation businesses.

## Goals of *National Get Outdoors Day*:

- To reach first-time visitors to public lands
- To reconnect our youth to the great outdoors.
- To encourage healthy, active outdoor fun.

For more information, visit <http://www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org>.



At National Get Outdoors Day events, kids and families explored the great outdoors.



## Nationwide



*Partners at more than 50 sites across the Nation came together to host National Get Outdoor Day events in 2008.*

*Just one visit to a special waterfall or lofty State forest overlook is often all that's needed to show first-timers that the 'Great Outdoors' is just that—great!*

—Michael DiBerardinis, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



# Robert Bateman's "Get To Know Your Wild Neighbors" A Strategic Forest



National partners are joining forces to use art to connect children with nature.

Kids in California are in for a treat. Beginning with a media campaign in the spring of 2009, a new partnership launched the U.S. version of the Canada-based G2K (*Get To Know*) program. This new program has its roots in the philosophy of Robert Bateman, one of the world's most-beloved nature artists, who has been a leading voice in conservation throughout his career.

The G2K program, which includes an annual art and writing contest, an interactive educational CD, education products, and a classroom-based school program, is moving to the United States, with its first efforts centered in California. San Diego is the hub of these efforts, with the intention of expanding the program throughout the United States in subsequent years.

The G2K program has invited a small, select group of national partners, who share common goals, to join in this effort. In addition to engaging the Forest Service, the program has invited the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Federation, and Children and Nature Network. Each organization will work to coordinate roles, responsibilities, and expectations, while further working with "local" partners to implement the program at the unit level.

For more information, visit <http://www.gettoknow.ca>.

## Goals of Robert Bateman's *Get To Know* program:

- Have students learn local species' names and characteristics to increase their awareness and understanding for wildlife, which will, in turn, instill increased empathy for the well-being of wildlife.
- Facilitate young Americans' connection with nature—through art.

*If you can't name things, how can you love them? And if you don't love them, then you're not going to care a hoot about protecting them or voting for issues that would protect them.*

— Robert Bateman, founder, *Get To Know*, Canada



# "Wild Neighbors" Service Partnership

Pacific Southwest Region, California



Chief Tom Tidwell is joined by the Get to Know partners at the unveiling of the new Robert Bateman painting, Family Hike, at the Get to Know launch in Los Angeles, CA, in September 2009.

**ROBERT BATEMAN**  
**GettoKnow**  
**CONTEST**

Contest Launch: **National Public Lands Day, Sept. 26**  
Open to all US residents age 18 or younger  
Celebrate **BIODIVERSITY!** Enter with...

**Artwork**      **Digital Photography**      **Writing**

Contest end date is November 30th

**Winners will receive:**

- ★ Their entry published in the Robert Bateman Contest Calendar and distributed throughout California
- ★ And many other wild prizes!

"Caring for the planet begins with getting to know our neighbors of other species."

For contest info, visit **www.gettoknow.ca**

The Get to Know program will sponsor an art contest for kids. Winning entries will be highlighted in a 2011 calendar, focused on the forest environment.



# The Ad Council Campaign—Discover



**R**econnecting Kids With Nature—a campaign effort between the Forest Service and The Advertising Council (Ad Council), Inc.—aims at creating a “reconnecting with nature” campaign to (1) compel today’s youth and their parents to personally experience America’s national forests and green spaces, creating a lifelong interest in nature and a legacy of stewardship; (2) encourage children and their parents to foster a connection with urban and national forests and learn to love and protect natural resources; and (3) motivate youth and parents to want to experience nature. The primary audience for the public service announcements will be “tweens” (ages 8 through 12), with a secondary audience of tweens’ parents and caregivers.

*The Reconnecting Kids With Nature campaign aims for kids to yearn to personally experience nature and actively persuade their parents and caregivers into taking them outdoors.*

This 3-year commitment to develop a communication strategy, create and produce multimedia products from the strategy, disseminate these products to national media outlets, and monitor media response will likely include activities such as TV productions, radio productions, and an interactive Web site. Initial rollout of the campaign products is planned for June 2009, in conjunction with national *Get Outdoors Day* and *Great Outdoors Month* activities.

For more information, visit <http://www.discovertheforest.org>.





# the Forest

Nationwide



## Just the facts

Media engagement opportunities for the *Reconnecting Kids With Nature* campaign include more than 33,000 media outlets.

# Betty Brinn Children's *Smokey Bear &*



At the *Home Sweet Home* exhibit, children can become junior rangers.

In March 2009, kids in Milwaukee, WI, were on hand for the worldwide debut of *Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl: Home Sweet Home*, a new green-built exhibit developed by the Betty Brinn Children's Museum in collaboration with the Forest Service. Smokey Bear, Woodsy Owl, and their forest friends are sharing important messages as they welcome visitors to imaginary woodland, urban, and stream settings that encourage families to spend time together outdoors and inspire children to discover and care for the natural resources that sustain our world—our home sweet home. The exhibit includes a variety of educational activities, costumes, puppets, and props that are especially appealing for children ages 2 through 8. The premiere, which included special appearances by a (very) huggable Smokey Bear, was sponsored by National City Bank.

After the *Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl: Home Sweet Home* exhibit closed on May 31, it embarked on a 4-year tour to museums and science centers across the country, beginning the summer of 2009.

For more information, visit <http://www.bbcmkids.org/exhibits/whatsnew.php>.

[Note: Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl are protected by congressional law and are used with permission from the Forest Service. *All Rights Reserved*. 16 USC 580p-4 & 18 USC 711a]

The goal of the *Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl: Home Sweet Home* exhibit is to encourage families to spend time together outdoors and inspire children to discover and care for the natural resources that sustain their world—their home sweet home.



# Museum: Woodsy Owl: Home Sweet Home

Milwaukee, WI



*The Home Sweet Home exhibit helps children explore and learn about natural resources. (Photos courtesy of Betty Brinn Children's Museum)*



*A special thank you to the many Forest Service employees who contributed images to this accomplishment report. These talented photographers include:*

*Joy Barney  
Lois Ziemann  
Sandy Frost  
Cam Hooley  
Mark Twery  
Amanda Walker  
Mary Cunningham  
Karen Maher*

*Darla Lenz  
Jean Claassen  
Elizabeth Sporcich  
Amanda Butterfield  
Vicki Arthur  
Tamberly Conway  
Steve Kozlowski  
Sheryl Lyles*

*Bob Denner  
Faith Duncan  
Victor Rios  
Julie Schreck  
Carrie Sekarak  
Jerry Davis  
Bill Williams  
Michael Schwartz*

*Mike Barnes  
Jason Beckstrand  
Lee Jacobsen  
Nancy Stremple  
Lindsay Campbell  
Katie Carroll  
MaryBeth Marks*



*People have to be involved in our natural resource management; they are the solution to many of the issues we face. We need for the people we serve to be engaged, to understand, to be passionate about the resources we manage, and there's no better time to start building that passion than when they are young. That's why we need to reconnect America's children to the great outdoors.*

—Forest Service Chief, Thomas L. Tidwell



*Forest Service Chief Thomas L. Tidwell  
(2009–Present)*



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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



Forest Service

1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20250-0003

800-832-1355  
<http://www.fs.fed.us>

FS-932  
November 2009



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